

Quite a turnaround at Turner Hill

What a difference a year makes. One year into its regeneration as a member-owned golf club, Turner Hill in Ipswich has made the kind of progress that gives club president Bob Talbot a grin from ear to ear.

"There's no recession at Turner Hill," says Talbot, 48, a founding Turner Hill member who spearheaded the membership's acquisition of the 288-acre property, including the golf course, surrounding conservation land, clubhouse/pro shop and century-old mansion from original developer Ted Raymond for a fraction of the original development costs.

Led by Talbot and member services manager Paul Casey, the golf membership has increased from 92, when they took over last year, to 160 as Memorial Day approached. They hope to reach the 200-member milestone by the end of the year.

"We're building toward what great North Shore clubs like Salem, Myopia and Essex have," added Talbot, a Bangor, Maine, native; "a terrific membership with tradition and history. We look at ourselves as a perfect blend of the new and the old. We are an old world golf club with glorious surroundings, a spectacular new-age golf course and the finest amenities found anywhere."



Turner Hill president Bob Talbot, left, shares a moment with British Open champ Padraig Harrington. Both are quite fond of the Ipswich course.

The club has already begun to write its own impressive tournament history as host of the 2006 New England PGA and corporate outings featuring Gary Player and 2007 British Open champion Padraig Harrington, both of whom raved about the Hurdzan-Fry layout.

Turner Hill has taken a major step in 2008 with the offering of its first social membership, called the Mansion Club. Created with a \$2 million renovation of the former Rice Mansion, the Mansion Club features a restaurant, fitness center, game room, golf course access, indoor hitting room, and renovated two-lane bowling alley that originated with the Rice family. The mansion, which will be available to the public for pre-arranged functions, will also be the scene of a mystery dinner theater, comedy and family nights.

June will mark the start of Turner Hill's "Kids Club," offering a wide-ranging summer fun/educational experience.

"What other country club offers all of this?" asks Talbot. "It's about investing in the club for the benefit of our members, their guests and the regional community that might like to arrange special events here at Turner Hill."

— Gary Larrabee

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